University of Alberta

"kakihikin kakiyaw iysiniwak mamtinacikan wahkotowin ota nikawinan askiy epimoticik mihko meskanaw neteh miyo pimatisowin"

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall 2004

Library and Archives Canada

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395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
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Direction du Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 0-612-95660-1
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 0-612-95660-1

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Canada

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Tansi Tatawow

Kipaha kimiskisik! close your eyes and open your mind to what the possibilities really are. Become unbound by the darkness that you are now witnessing. There in the darkness is a space that knows no boundary. Neither inside nor outside, no beginning no ending, just an endless sea of infinity. Everything is related there in the darkness as it is here on this earthlife. From the smallest pebble of sand to the largest mountain. From the single celled animals to the animals that think they have reason. Yes this earthlife where the great mystery mamowtawsowin of creation is celebrated by all inhabitants but for a brief moment in time and space. Our lives are like the feather on the eagle's wing, we soar to great heights but in the end we are shed and fall to the ground only to be replaced by new growth.

Oh! Not, only is this thing I call the earthlife unbound by time and space but when I speak of space I refer to our relations, the star people, the acakosak that live all around us. These acakosak watch our every move and they know…They know how, who, what, when and why we are related. Our progenitors the peoples of the shadow that long studied the fall and the reflection of the shadow … knew. They still know that we are all related. These peoples of the shadows have now returned into the earth, to our mother nikawiynan aski for a period of rest, a period of safe keeping as their

progeny the sweetgrass peoples flourish on our mother's breast. We are the peoples of the grass roots, the sweetgrass peoples.

How does this indigenous knowledge of who, what, where, when, why and how get related and known to the peoples? A complex network of signs and symbols that are as old as the peoples themselves and it is called nehiyawewin. Nehiyawewin is the epistemology of the peoples. Mamowtawsit has given us this language so that we can stay in constant contact with all of creation. We are related to all of creation, and this kinship does not start and stop at humanity. Humanity is one speck of dust in this cosmology of creation. If human kind were to vanish from creation then this mamatowsowin, this great mystery would continue to flourish.

Utilizing this simple yet complex indigenous ontology of kinship or wakotowin the in-human produced a problem that forces man to dehumanize man and woman [will be dialogued]. The driving force of this dialogue is the desire to study this in-human problem. The desire rooted in my own lifetime of pain, shame, violence and persecution. This grief, which was inflicted upon me by my own brothers and sisters in the name of love...

Mahtohtsan Kamik

For the first half of my life I was raised in a hot house a mahtohtsahn kamik of indigenous mysticism or miyo pimatisowin the good life. One of the first

experiences I had with the sweat lodge was when I was 6 years old when a gifted man from the land of the long knives came to my father's house at onicikskwapowinihk. He had built a mahtohtsahn kamik and was 'doctoring' peoples.

At one of these occasions on a hot day in July my cousin and I decided to go into the sweat lodge for the first time. We went to the house to put on our shorts and to get the biggest towels we could find. We knew it was going to be hot in the lodge because we saw the preparations that went into the building of the sweat lodge and the burning of the stones, asiniyak. The fire that heats the asiniyak is built on a platform constructed of wood that is cut about 36 inches long and are about 3 – 4 inches in diameter. These logs are stacked in two rows, one row going one way and the other row running perpendicular to the first row. The asiniyak are placed on top of the second row usually about 44 asiniyak in this man's lodge (some lodges use more rocks some use less) and wood about the same girth and length are placed around the perimeter of the 'table' of rocks. This pyre is prayed over and set to burn for about 1 to 2 hours. Once the rocks are red hot or the table burns through the sweat lodge is ready to enter into.

We went to the place where they were holding this very sacred ceremony and waited for the door to open. We heard the song they were singing inside

finish then we heard a commotion coming from the inside of the sweat lodge. A shrill scream pierced our ears and shook me to my core. The door flap flew open and one of my uncles tumbled out of the lodge and lay motionless on the ground, he was glistening bright red in the hot July sun as the steam from his body rose and dissipated in the heat of the day. I had faced many a dangerous situation up to that period in my life, facing down bullies and creatures that would taunt me late at night in my dreams but I never been in this situation before. Thinking quickly I slunk back into the woods only to be teased and jeered by my cousins that had seen the event transpire. His father, my uncle, saw my cousin with whom I was going to go into the lodge and before he could get away he was ordered to "astam pepetikiwik, semak". I quickly went back to the house to change my clothes and returned to the sacred ceremony only to hear my cousin's screams of agony coming from within the lodge. To this day I don't recall what was worse, having to listen to my cousin's screams of agony or to the jeers of my relations baiting me for not going through with my commitment to sweat that day. Years later I did finally sweat with that gifted man, a true elder. Within that sweat lodge he was asked, "has anyone ever fainted in here from the heat?" His reply with his southern American drawl "nahh they just pass out".

I have come in contact with some truly gifted peoples that knew their space within this good life and they had a connection, a connection that was so profound that they could connect with this mamowtowsowin and do some truly mysterious things. These gifted peoples in our lands are given the title of elder.

Kiteyahk/Kiseiyiniwak

Kiteyahk and kise iyiniwak are names given to these gifted peoples. The root of each word is kindness, and it is through kindness that these peoples lead their lives. It is through the law of kindness that these peoples help, heal, guide and support the next generation into the good life. The law of kindness is one of the central laws that mamotawsit has given us to lead our lives and to ensure balance amongst all of creation in this great mystery.

How does one become an elder within this space and time? One must make a connection to all of creation. One must honor the kinship with all of creation. One must learn to love oneself first before one can love all of creation. How does one love all of creation when one is busily making divisions along the lines of the color of one's skin, eye, hair, and language? There are numerous ceremonies amongst indigenous peoples to teach people the importance of kinship, the importance of language, the importance of the natural laws and the sacredness of life itself. The transformation from

adulthood to eldership is a communal event. It is the nation that bestows the term of kise iyiniw upon a person. Peoples that go out in the world and announce that they are elders are looked upon with an air of suspicion. The educational process to become an elder is a lifelong journey. This journey is called the seven stages of life. It is through these seven stages that the laws of education kiskinohamatowin (learning from a higher power), kiskinohamakowin (learning from each other) and kisikinohamsowin (learning from teaching others) are observed, learned, followed and practiced. Pahstawowin or over stepping the laws needs to be avoided; when peoples practice pahstawowin they are said to be popcorn elders or instant elders.

Seven Stages of Life

On this earthlife we pass through seven stages of being in order that we become fully awakened and are able to see, hear, feel, and speak the gift that creator has given us. When we are first born onto this life we are born into a space of happiness. Our days are filled with smiles and laughter for we are cared for by loving parents; our needs are met in every way. We then move into a period in our lives called fast time. At this juncture our lives are filled with choices. These choices are all good for us and we want to do everything all at once; our lives become so fast that we don't sit and think before we

act; we become confused and our life's road becomes cluttered with the poor choices that we have made.

Step three is search time. With the help of caring parents and grandparents they guide us through fast time and lead us on our search for truth. Questions of: "why am I here"? "what is life all about"? are looked at, at this time. We then move into truth time; it is at this time when the natural laws of kindness, honesty, sharing, and strength are revealed to us. It is up to us to follow these laws as we journey upon the red road of life.

Decision time is when we make up our minds as to who we are, where are we going, who are we going to choose as a mate.

Planting time is when we raise our blood for the creator; it is a time when women are honored for their life giving qualities. Within the kinship system if there happens to be a two souled person then they are still considered a diminutive aunt nikawis, a small mother, or nocawis, a small father. So if you choose a same sex union then you still have children to help raise.

The red road is that trail of blood from our progenitors to our progeny. The red road ensures our immortality and ensures that miyo pimatisowin, the good life, for future generations is there for the taking.

The final leg of life's journey is elder time or kise time, kindness time. The greatest gift that the creator has given to us is the gift of love. We only arrive

at this kindness time when we traveled this road once for ourselves, twice for our children and three times for our grandchildren. The final leg of this journey is to serve, to guide, to heal, and to teach; this is what makes the good life possible.

Fast time

I have been fasting for the last half of my life and have managed to make a connection and find my place within this mysterious mamotowsowin miyo pimatisowin good life. The very first time I went out fasting, the elder told us many stories. When the elder spoke he told us "if you catch any of these teachings then they are yours". He also stated "you can only take in as much knowledge as you are ready for". With these two qualifiers I have been like a sponge when stories are told for it is the stories that are the method of teaching that have long been the conduit for passing on the meaning of life. It is the stories that are the philosophical backbone of the good life.

The second stage of life is called fast time and it is at this point in a person's life when they are ready to go on their first fast. Hollywood has taken this highly personal psychologically sacred ceremony associated with the rites of passage and turned it into a popular form of dreaming or vision questing. In preparing for a fast, a person arrives with sacred offerings wipinasowinak ekwa mena iscemas ekwa ospwahkan and offers their total being for answers

to questions that fill their life with confusion. The offering of the flags, the tobacco, the pipe and the self strips away the layers of insecurity and leaves one in the gaze of creation. This is a summer ceremony when all of creation is awake and alive; when all of creation is at the faster's beck and call for help, healing, guidance and support. To the answers of the troubling questions that living within this great mystery has to offer. Through the commitment to go one, two, three, or four days and nights without water and food one feeds upon one's self and is forced to go within for the answers. One is forced to get know one's self. The luxury of comparing oneself to the other is no longer there. You are all alone, or are you? Is one ever alone? In the narrow definition of humanity one can be alone. In the definition of kinship within this great mystery one is never alone, we are all related, once humanity comes to this realization as a collective then this great mystery called the good life miyo pimatsowin can once again flourish upon this earthlife.

Fasting For The Answer

How is knowledge formed and privileged? Within this writing I need to utilize the knowledge base of my ancestors. They lived so that I could at this juncture look at the societal problem of racism. I need to practice the newo-iyiniw laws of creation and honor those grandmothers and grandfathers who

are on my mikoh meskanaw and are awaiting the sweet embrace of remembering who I am and How I relate not only to them but to all my relations in this great mystery. Before I presented my pipe to the elder that was leading the fast I showed him my wipinasowina. I showed him my flags and tobacco and asked for help to understand how it is some people could acts so horribly to other peoples. How could slavery exist? How could some peoples be killed in the name of the father, the son and the holy ghost? Why is it that peoples could be forced from the lands that their peoples were born on, lived on, buried upon and died upon and had deep ties to; were being forced to leave? The elder looked at me for a period of time; he reached for my pipe and asked for the sweet grass. Not a word was spoken between me, and the elder as the pipe was being presented to the great mystery. "mamowtawsit nanaskimow ewapimaw awa ospwakan…" a great sense of sadness was conveyed with his words of need, with tears streaming down both of our faces, a cry in the sacred form of prayer was sent to the four directions so help in solving this mystery could be heard. With each turn of the pipe, a force bringing help could be felt within the mihkiwap.

With the sweet and comforting smell of mosom wikask wafting to the top of the mihkiwap cleansing the ceremony the elder offered the pipe for help, healing, support and guidance. Once the elder was finished his prayer with

the pipe we smoked. As we smoked, the beings that were summoned for their help smoked with us too. The pipe called to other helpers as well and we all enjoyed the taste of tobacco mixed with kinnikinnick and red willow bark. The power of the pipe to reach into the spirit world was realized. "They" were there with us sharing in the moment of prayer.

I was honored by the power of this man's prayer. It is unknown to call the powers into being during a pipe ceremony. I was in awe. Mamaskac is a term to convey this sense of awe. I was even more in awe when one of the beings started to speak, "During my earthlife time I was known as Audre Lorde". "My gift was to be able to write. I came when I heard what you were asking for because I want to help". "I once wrote that 'the master's tools will never dismantle the masters house'. With this in mind; I have discovered through much empirical research that you my brother cannot possibly use the research methodologies that have been privileged for far too long a period in time by the mainstream academies". "To truly get to the roots of racism you need to go back to that hot house and offer the wepinasownan to the powers that control what is happening here on the earthlife, and we are here to help".

I looked at the elder who was sitting there looking humble in a powerful way. He stated " this time in the next four days is yours, your questions will

undoubtedly be answered, for you have started in the way that you have been shown". "These beings are here to help you. They will bring answers to you. When you get the answers to these questions nosim, then you must share these answers with all of our relations. We need to restore the sacred balance; we need to get back to miyo pimatsowin".

A million and one thoughts and feelings went *racing* through my mind. I have been out fasting before and had been gifted with visits from ancestors in the spirit world but never before had this phenomenon happened to me. My rational mind was frayed like a rope that had used to pull a great weight and was near breaking. Right at this moment in time I am writing a thesis for my master's at a mainstream institution. Would this institution accept this epistemological approach? Wait a minute, epistemological? What does epistemological have to do with the pipe?

Deep from the recesses of my being the old one spoke "careful, peyatihk, we are here for you nosim rest your mind Kipaha kimiskisik! close your eyes and open your mind to what the possibilities really are. Become unbound by the darkness that you are now witnessing. There in the darkness is a space that knows no boundary. Neither inside nor outside, no beginning no ending, just an endless sea of infinity. Everything is related there in the darkness as it is here on this earthlife. From the smallest pebble of sand to the largest

mountain. From the single celled animals to the animals that think they have reason. Yes this earthlife where the great mystery mamowtawsowin of creation is celebrated by all inhabitants but for a brief moment in time and space. Our lives are like the feather on the eagle's wing, we soar to great heights but in the end we are shed and fall to the ground only to be replaced by new growth". "Your work here nosim is very important so rest your mind and let us guide you".

We finished smoking the pipe and the elder shook my hand; he said, "get ready, in the morning we will have a sweat and put you out on the land". As dusk turned into night I smudged my offerings and went to sleep trying to rest a troubled mind.

Pawatamowin

That night as I slept, I dreamt of many things. I dreamt I was a pirate on the ocean. Going from shore to shore encountering many strange and wonderful people and places. I dreamt my ship was full of gold and silver and high on my ship on its great white mast was a huge crucifix stained a bright red, a red that shone in the day's light. I dreamt I had my choice of any dark maiden in any port in any land. However, all at once the seas churned and bubbled with blood; the mistress who was at the head of my ship came alive and turned on me and my crew. This mistress threw an ugly spell upon us

and deep within this enchantment my hands and body were covered in the same crimson that had painted the cross on my ship. Crimson flowed from the ship. The gold and silver doubloons were drenched in blood and stank of rotten flesh. The ports we stopped in were now all light with the sickly glow of fire, a fire that erupts from burning flesh and a black acrid smoke that turns the stomach upon the first whiff.

I needed to awake from this paradise turned to hell. I could feel the fires burning searing my flesh "mmmph…ooooowww aaahhahh rrrrrghhhh". The maiden that once guided my journey was now pulling my arm urging me to do more for her. "Get me more I need more, more gold, more lands, more blood, more……." Thrashing and trying to break free from her grasp I struck out. "Wake up Nosim!" the elder yelled as he shook my arm. I awoke in a state of panic and relief for this had all been some sick twisted dream.

The Elder asked, "when did you come to sleep outside"? "You fell asleep in the tipi and when we came to start the sweat fire you were out here". "As the fire grew hotter and hotter you started to thrash about". "Are you all right"? There are strange things that happen during a fasting ceremony; this is just another strange event.

The sweat was ready so we began the ceremony. There in the darkness of the lodge, I thought of my dream and I prayed for meaning. The sweat was hot,

crazy hot. I have been in hot sweats before this one but this was indescribable. There in the darkness my dream keeper explained my dream to me "Yes, in the name of empire, with religion, politics, and education on your side in a profound ideological eurocentric historical perspective of human relations you skewed, twisted, transformed and destroyed the balance here in this mamwotowsowin". "The ugly horrific violent death and mayhem continues to alter your being; you are becoming the question to your answer". "The division, marginalisation, alienation and violence are but a few of the problems associated with life, but don't despair we are here to help you". Shwosh, shwosh, hissssssssssss greeted my ears as I came back to consciousness my nostrils burned as they let the searing heat into my lungs. My skin burned. As a sense of panic enveloped me, I heard the old man call for the door "OTENA". As the fog from the steam cleared I made eye contact with the old man. He looked at me and gave me a look that only two people that have shared an experience could convey, and he smiled a knowing smile.

The Way

Bending willows to build a fasting lodge is hard work when you have been without food and water for 20 hours, especially after a ridiculously hot sweat lodge ceremony. But, what the heck, I am no longer of the earthlife. I am now walking with the nimosomtik ėkwa mena nokomtik in the gaze of mamawtawosit. I shouldn't complain because before I could bend these willows I had to walk some distance to cut the willows and drag them along with all my fasting gear out to the middle of this bush. Why does it have to be so hot when these ceremonies take place? It so muggy in this bush, it feels like I am still in the sweat lodge.

The oskapeysak are a big help. These fine young men help to punch the holes in the ground with the steel bar. They don't do all the work but they are a huge support. Finally the task is complete I place my bedroll in the lodge. The old man comes around and says, "make sure you smudge your lodge before you enter". He takes a quick look around my fasting site and states "make sure to smudge your offerings and to smoke your pipe as well". He shakes my hand and wishes me well. He and the oskapeywak head back to the main camp leaving me to my prayers.

The first day of any of the fasts I have done is marked by sacredness. Also it has been my experience leading fasts that, on this day, most people are

focused on what they have come for. They are in deep prayerful mode as I am today. If we had a religion, then I would say that the religiosity of this day would be at its highest point during any fasting ceremony. However, we do what we need to do and as Indigenous peoples we are told to practice. Practice your ways is what I have been told because our ways are not found in any dogmatic book.

Lighting the wikask I smudge the outside and then the inside of the lodge; I am feeble from the lack of nourishment in my body yet my mind is focused and strong. I am shaking as I finish setting up my fasting camp and then retreat into my lodge to get some rest. With the sweet smell of wikask in my nostrils I take a few deep breaths and drift off to a deep sleep.

My maternal and paternal grandparents have passed on to the spirit world some time ago. I have not seen them in decades. However, to my astonishment there they are standing over me dressed in their finest clothes and looking very happy. They converse amongst themselves for awhile and then turn to me and smile. Just as quick as they appeared to me they are gone.

I awake to find myself feeling very alone and very lonesome for those beings that have been away from me for far too long. Their visit has flooded my emotions with feelings that stirred old memories that still reside at the

core of my being. Memories of a young child playing with toys of wooden blocks rummaged from a building site from where my father would toil. There was a serene sense of safety within that imaginary world of adventure on the floor of my grandfather's house under my grandmother's gaze.

On those cold winter nights by the glow of the pot bellied Franklin stove that glowed red from the wood ablaze within. My grandfather would place me on his lap and talk about the devil that used to make women and children walk into the ovens. These ovens which would glow with the fires of their flesh "just like this stove glows right here knife". I would ask him, "grandfather why would he do such a thing" his answer in a somber tone, "when people go to hell the fires of hell burn red and hot just like this stove. The devil he was on earth for a time knife and we beat him". Now that I have time to reflect on what my grandfather had told me I realize that my grandfather's devil was Adolph Hitler. My grandfather, a treaty Indian, fought for the allied forces on the side of Canada. My father always makes it a point to state "He did not have to fight for Canada because in 1940's Indian peoples were not citizens of Canada; it wasn't until the Indian Act was amended in 1960 that the Indian peoples become enfranchised and were given the suffrage". I miss those kise iyiniwak for the memories of them bring me back to something that I have lost somehow along the way, some time ago.

I light my pipe and pray for help. After my prayer in a sacredly profound space, I smoke. Watching the smoke gently wafting to the heavens; my mind is focused on the question that brings me here. The tobacco is sweet and it tastes good just about as good as a bunch of green grapes on a vine. Grapes that are dripping with the morning dew that are cool and refreshing. I take a deep draw on the pipe and pull the smoke deeply into my lungs only to be brought back to consciousness by the burning that is erupting deep within my lungs. I exhale sharply and violently cough out the remainder of smoke in my lungs and try in vain to get some fresh air back into my center. I can feel my countenance growing green from the sweet tobacco smoke that I inadvertently pulled into my lungs. I can feel the nausea that is quickly overtaking the thought of fresh grapes on the vine, when, to my amazement, there rolling on the floor in a fit of laughter is a little person.

Dressed in a brightly colored flowing robe with long natty hair, this being was enjoying witnessing my pleasure turn to pain. I quickly tried to recompose myself when this being spoke, "Hey mon what you be smoking in yer pipe"? I looked closer at this being and noticed his hair was in dread locks. The colors of red, green, and yellow emanating from his tunic were glowing and making the inside of my lodge even brighter on this bright hot sunny day.

"Bob is that you", "no mon I be hey zeus", "hey what"? "You know Yahweh". "Jesus Christ what the hell kind of fast am I on here"! " Ire Ire mon that be me hey zeus", "but! you can't be Jesus you're black"! "In the flesh mon". "But, I have only seen you with blond hair, blue eyes, and white skin". "Ya mon dem a be funny people, they take a black man and make him white just so they can satisfy their need for superiority". "I thought you were Bob Marley when you I first saw you in my lodge". "No not King Bob but I loved the brother's music and his messages he gave the world, and I told myself if I ever get a another chance to be back here on the earthlife I am coming back as Bob, so here I am how can I help you"? "What do you mean"? "Well mamawtawsit heard your prayer and sent me to help".

"OK answer this question, where or I should ask when did people start to divide themselves based on color or race". "Well my momma was a Jew which makes me a Jew and I grew up in the Middle East where the Jews continue to live. When I was born the empire of Rome ruled over my people's lands so I was sent by mamawtawsit to liberate my peoples. To the peoples I was known as 'the way' or the savior". "Okay so what does this have to do with racism"? "Well the Romans came to our lands and ruled us; they had the fairer skin and were able to differentiate between us Jews and themselves just by the color of our skins. But when I grew up and started to

liberate the peoples it was my own peoples that spoke against me and turned me over to the Romans. It was reverse or what you call it racism turned inward that killed me".

"Yes I agree racism is very bad that is why I am here in this fast to find out where it comes from, and my peoples have been subjected to religious zealotry since we had contact with 'the way".

"Oh don't blame me for that remember; I spoke out against the church, the Rabbis and the Pharisees. These peoples were supposed to follow the creator's way but they did not and from what we all see in the spiritworld they still aren't". "So why does the creator let these people continue to oppress in the name of religion"? "Because of kindness, the creator figures that the people will find 'the way' once again". "Well here you are 'the way' which I have 'found' but this horrible thing is still here, so now where do I look"? "Look to the holy roman empire when emperor Caesar Constantine saw that his roman empire was going to crumble he turned to religion thus the holy roman empire of roman Catholicism was born. A pope was named 'the father' of that religion; we all scoffed in the spiritworld and a whole new empire emerged with man as the head and the women as the body. From that time all the rulers of the world, and the world was Europe at that time, all had to be the descent of god and the pope ruled over everyone

because he and only he had the right to speak to god, people forgot that they could all speak to mamawtawsit". "I think I got it: when the Europeans came to our lands they were acting for the pope and building the Roman Empire"? "Yes exactly but be careful what you write, do, or say remember they killed me for trying to liberate my peoples and they will do the same to you if you are a threat to them, let us finish smoking now".

I relit my pipe and passed it to the Christ; we enjoyed the taste of the tobacco as we slowly drew the smoke from the pipe stem into our beings. When we finished smoking he bid me farewell and told me "keep up the good work, you know your peoples and my peoples were very similar to each other; we both roamed the land freely at one time; we both hunted and fished and lived off the land until our persecutors came; have faith my brother: we in the spiritworld are here to help". With that he left, as I cleaned my pipe the idea of Mamaskac went through my mind. Mamaskac is the term to describe a supernatural occurrence and this was indeed a supernatural occurrence. I have heard stories of people seeing Jesus and then turning there life over to him like Paul on the road to Damascus or the Caesar Constantine but I do not feel like that. I have my sacred pipe in my hand, which is the communicator to the spiritworld, and I feel deeply profoundly inspired by knowing this. And what the Christ has told me about

liberation makes me want to delve further for a better understanding of how people could commit acts of terror upon other peoples here on the earthlife. I finished cleaning and reloading my pipe and I needed some coals from the fire to smudge my pipe but I did not have my fire. I lit a matchstick and started my sweetgrass wikask smudge and smudged my pipe. I placed my pipe upon the helper sticks and went about gathering wood for my evening's fire. It was late in the afternoon and the feelings of feeble weariness are now but a memory I am feeling recharged after my visit from the spiritworld.

My God is better than your God!

Gathering dried pieces of wood for the nights fire is comforting yet it is hard work. I am comforted to know that I am going to be nurturing another living being this evening and this living being is going to keep me company on this dark night. This being I am talking about is iskwetew the fire. The old women spirit has given her name to the keeper that is going to keep me safe on this upcoming dark night.

On my very first fast I had the good fortune of fasting in close proximity to my father. My fasting lodge was up close to the communal fire. On the first night I fell asleep and when I awoke there on the ceiling of my fasting lodge were lights, lots and lots of little lights. My rational mind at the time said to my being oh those are the lights caused by the fire outside coming through

the holes in your canvas tarp. So to prove this I went and peeked out a hole in my tarp to look at the fire and to my aghast the fire was out!

I went to see my father the next morning after a long and restless night of prayer and soul searching. He laughed and said to me "you are gifted my son most people come to fast and never see, hear or experience anything you come out here and on your first night out you see the spirits. But my son you must be careful because on the first night of being out here alone the dark ones will come and offer you the easy way, and if you take that way then you will lead a life of hardship. However the next time you get a visit from anything light your pipe and offer the pipe to your visitor; if this visitor is good then they will stay and smoke with you. If the visitor is not supposed to be there then they will leave. What you saw last night are the sisikwanwak those are the rattles and they are all around us all of the time they are the voices of our ancestors and the voices of those yet to be born they were a good sign".

I have been fasting many many years now and my father's words always come to mind as I prepare for the first night alone in the darkness.

As I lay comfortably staring into the flickering of the redness of the fire wondering just what is this earthlife all about and why do people have to treat each other so badly when we are all so supposed to be related? I am in a

profound space as darkness envelops the land and the light of the fire and company of my pipe are here to watch over me on this warm summer's night. Twice the fire has gone to embers and twice I rebuilt it more for the comfort than the warmth that is radiating from it.

Sharply from a short distance away a twig snaps and I hear the rustling of the underbrush of the forest that I inhabit. I look out to see what it was that was making the noise when out of nowhere there appears a figure with tattered flowing robes. Robes that were filthy and worn with time, these robes looked liked they once were majestically embroidered with the finest gold and silver threads and still had some of the sheen and luster that betrayed the now capricious aura that is now all about them. "Hello savage! What do you think you are doing here! Don't you know that I passed a Papal Bull in 1493 called the 'Inter Caeterra' and that decreed that all lands outside of the realm could be claimed for the kingdom as long as they were uninhabited by Christians? Also that all peoples that are found within those lands did indeed have a soul, a soul that is worthy of saving? Come my son let us pray let us pray to my god, the god that shall bring you to salvation"

"Who do you think you are and what makes you believe that your god is better then my god"? "I am Pope Innocent IV and I am the leader of the

Holy Roman Empire. I received Christopher Columbus upon his return from his magnificent voyage of discovery. I am the emissary to the lord thy god". "If you are whom you say you are then why do you wonder around this earthlife with these smelly tattered robes? Why are you not in heaven with the lord thy god? Who sent you?"

"Who are you to question me, you savage, doing your pagan rituals here under the cover of darkness in the forest, praying to your false gods… ?" As he continued his rant I picked up my pipe and placed a lit match to the bowl all the while thinking 'you don't stand a chance against my pipe, you don't stand a chance against my prayer" "…You will burn in the eternal fires of hell for what you are doing here, I see the missionaries we sent still have not completed their work". When the pipe was lit I offered the pipe to his holiness however when he went to reach for it a loud crack that reverberated throughout the forest could be heard and I am sure throughout creation. With the loud noise that shook creation was the exit of his holiness; now where did he get to?

The Missionary Position

Nikakisimowin ospakwan once again to mamawtawsit. Nanaskamaw mamawtawsit ewicihik ote tipiskaw sakaw. Nanaskamaw mena

epyitsinamowin nimossomcik ekwa nokomtick… nanaskamowin kakiyaw nowakomakanak atoyawkanak ewicihik ota ahaw pepetaw.

"nimiyweytin kitoskewin ota nosim peyitsinaw kitospwakan nipetwan mena". As I passed the pipe to the old man sitting there before me I knew who this was. By the pictures that I have seen of big bear mistahi muskwa I knew that this was he. As he took my pipe and slowly drew in the sweet smoke I could see the satisfaction that appeared upon his countenance. A well of emotion came over me as I began to cry. I was so happy, honored, humbled and relieved that mistahi muskwa came to join me especially after the holy one left in such a hurry. As he returned the pipe to me I too could see that he was crying; there in the darkness we cried together as we shared the pipe.

"I liked how you handled that miserable old man, he has been wondering around this earthlife since his death trying to convert people to his way of doing things. The creator saw him approaching your camp and sent me to intervene but you did good nosim. When I was here on the earthlife they sent missionaries to do exactly what he did to you. They tried to scare us into believing that there was a hell and that the devil would be there to greet us all when we died. In the daylight they were fucking with our minds and in the evening they would fuck our women and children I think this where the

'missionary position' comes from. When I was here I refused to take their god; they promised us salvation in a place that was called heaven, heaven on earth. They told us to close our eyes and pray; when some of our people did they took all that was ours. I refused to close my eyes, I lost nothing. I see what you are doing here keeping our ways alive; we know that there is only one creator and the answers you seek are being shown to you. What he told you of his laws is true. His laws are written on paper by men. Men that think that they are better then other men just by the color of their skin. They have been working this set of ideas for a couple of thousand years. Since a man named PLATO came up with the idea that there was a 'nature of man to be either slaves or masters' he too is still wondering around the earthlife but he won't be bothering you; I will see to that".

We finished smoking and big bear kept talking, his every word soothing my spirit making my body melt into a pool of calm certainty. A certainty that what I am doing out here in the forest with all of creation is indeed the way of knowing that has kept our peoples, peoples for time immemorial. "Go to sleep nosim I shall tend to your fire and watch over you until kisikaw pesim awakes to keep you for the rest of the day". I smile at big bear and am humbled that a being of his stature is here to watch over me.

I crawl into my fasting lodge and close my eyes. I close my eyes and opened my mind to what the possibilities really are. Becoming unbound by the darkness that I am now witnessing. There in the darkness is a space that knows no boundary. Neither inside nor outside, no beginning no ending, just an endless sea of infinity. Everything is related there in the darkness as it is here on this earthlife.

Lets Make A Deal

Grrrrroooowwwwlllllll, grrrrraaaaahhhhhlllllll I sat up bolt upright and reached for my pipe thinking there is another visitor hear only to double over in intense deep visceral pain. Gerrrrrraaaaahhhhhhhlllllll went my stomach once again. I got out of my bed roll put my shoes on and made a beeline for the outhouse. Indeed there was a spirit that wanted to come and aid me in my time of need, for I recognized the calling card of the 'great one', manitou iyisen the fart spirit. As I hurried to the outhouse I was thankful all at once for modernity. I did not have to squat in the forest I could have the modern comforts of home right out here in the forest. As I sat upon the porcelain general admission seating out came manito iyisen. The deep visceral pain that was central to my being was now being soothed with the arrival of the great one.

Within the indigenous paradigm there is a spirit for everything and a song that accompanies each ceremonial or phenomenonological event. Manito iyisen is there to pray to when we are experiencing stomach ailments, because when we fart there is the easing of stomach pain especially if one were experiencing sapsowiyan or the 'runs'. On the fast one of the worst ailments to experience is sapsowiyan. Having the runs robs the body of precious water and when there is no water forthcoming you don't want to be

purging water out of your system but perhaps your body is cleansing itself so this could be a good thing, it is all related, and oh so mysterious.

When I arrived back at my little encampment there sitting beside my fire was the elder, my mentor, my guide and my supporter. "tanisi nosim" "kikac nitahksot" "you're not feeling well today"? "I am just about not feeling well but the day is still young".

"nosim big bear stopped in on me early this morning he said you were doing really good over here, he also told me he chased this old pope away that was bothering you last night". "kitapwan, what you say is true, nimosom".

"nosim have you received your answer yet"? "nimosom, so far the creator has sent his son Jesus to speak to me, did you know mosom that Jesus is a black man and was actually sent to free his people from the Romans"?

"nosim, we are all sons of the creator and Jesus is our brother just like wisakicahk, but if he is indeed black then that's fine by me because we are all related he could be purple and we would still be related, relations run deep my grandson". "Jesus also said he was a Jew and that he was supposed to be 'the way'. A whole religion was built around him, so in my way of thinking behind every good catholic and Christian there is a Jew. Without Judaism and the Christ there would be no Catholics or Christians today.

When the bible was written about him he said it was written by groups of

men and it was these groups of men that wanted the control of other men. He also spoke of this Plato guy who is still wondering around here like the pope guy because they still have not got the message that we are all equal and we are all related". "nosim you have received a lot of answers already, you must have really prayed to get Jesus himself down here". "mosom, Jesus was so happy to be back down here again".

"nosim, it is good that manito iyisen came to see you, that spirit is very powerful. There is a story of when the body first came to this earthlife and the head said it wanted to be the boss, because the head said it was supposed to do all the thinking for the body. The heart then came forward and said it wanted to be the boss because it said it pumped all the blood to the body giving the body life so it should be the boss. Of course this dialogue went on and on with all the body parts having a say. Finally it was the ass holes time to speak and it said it should be the boss at this all the body parts laughed with glee and viciously tormented the ass hole for even speaking. So the ass hole thought to itself, okay I will show every 'body' that I mean business. So a day went by and the body was still laughing at the ass hole. The next day there was some discom-'fart' because there was still no action from the ass hole. Finally on the third day the body was all seized up in pain much like you were this morning and the 'whole' of the body pleaded with the 'hole'

of the body for some relief. All the body parts agreed that the ass hole is indeed the boss and with that the ass hole began to function again much to the relief of the body. The moral of this story nosim is that always when there is a boss to deal with, the boss is most often the ass hole, at least when it comes to human bodies, and a powerful ally to dealing with the ass hole is manito iyisen". With this we both laughed and laughed and I was very happy to have some company to start this the second day of the fast. The old man left me to return to the earthlife leaving me here again with my prayers, my pipe, my smudges and my offerings here in the spiritworld.

The second day of any of the fasts I have been on are the most long, the most painful, the most sorrowful and yet the most liberating day of the fast to experience. There is a misnomer in naming this ceremony the fast because time drags when one is on a fast, especially on this particular day. It seems as though the sun gets up and stays up for a whole month on this one day. The sun is up and it heats up, and heats up, and one goes looking for relief from the sun. Places in the bush where one would never think of laying for relief are experienced. An old rotted log, a moist bed of moss under the cover of the forest foliage creates a safe canopy from the gaze of the sun. The pain of one's being is brought to the forefront on this day, your body is wailing for water, crying for food and there you are working on the

conviction that is a spillover from the day before. The day before when you are all sanctimonious in your resolve to find the answer to your fast.

On this day of great sorrow one is making deals with the powers that be for some relief, some help, some comfort and most of all for some answers.

Around noon I am guessing I find myself back in the throes of pain and sorrow. Feeling sorry for myself and wondering what the hell am I doing out here anyway.

Perhaps it might be a lot easier to go back to the academy and do the research just like any other normal rational being and quote and cite the so called masters in this philosophical field. But I have been out here for two days already and I am more then half way through this thing and all I have to do is get past this day. You know what is the most common about this forest and any other forest?

Roots: all trees have roots, all plants have roots and it seems that in every space that I have ever chosen to fast there is a root in the middle of my back constantly stabbing, me urging me to get up and pray. To get up and stop laying around waiting for the heat of the day to go by, to get up and do something. There is only so much prayer I can do, I have been praying nonstop for the last two and a half days.

These damn roots are killing me! I wail to the creator "I need your help I do not think I can do this any more". "mamawtawsit if you help me get past this day I promise I will treat all of creation with love and respect. If you help me get past this day creator I promise I will do all my tasks right away I will not procrastinate. I promise to treat all women with respect creator". So here I am playing lets make a deal with the creator trying to fill the day with idle promises that I would probably never think of again in any other situation other than on my deathbed, but I have never been on my deathbed so I do not know that either.

Ha ha ha ha ha laughter fills the air hahahahahaha and quickly becomes quite irritating to me in this moment. I return to consciousness and look about the forest floor where I am laying. There sitting a few feet away from is a little old man cackling with pure precociousness. "howena kiya"? I ask him. This stops the laughter.

"I am Thomas Hobbes, I am a man that speaks the king's English and whom might you be, for I do not recognize the language that you speak nor do I recognize you fully as a man"! "niya mistahiya, niya newo iyiniw, ota nikaskitan" "ah, a real live savage, well savage what you are doing with GOD almighty is contracting and don't you know that a contract is the transfer of rights between men, real men, and neither you nor God is of any

reality, so how could you enter into a contractual agreement? I wrote about this fact oh so long ago in the book called Leviathan in 1651. I suggest you go read about this and save yourself a lot of pain and suffering or can you read savage"? "Oh I can read you barbarian cur, and why should I go read your book when you are sitting right here in front of me"? "Oh so you can speak English"!

"Why yes I can speak this bastardized language which isn't really a language unto itself, is it? This language borrows, no steals, from all 'othered' languages and then passes itself off as the language of reasoned choice"? "Easy there savage don't get hostile here don't you know that one of the great laws is the search for peace"? "Yes and peace is what I am looking for, peace and comfort from the eons of hatred directed at peoples from people just because of the taint of their skin". "There, there now savage these are two concepts that your little brain could never possibly hope to understand the meanings of reason and of peace". "Why must you denigrate me? To make yourself feel noble? Just because your society writes everything in books and goes around the world raping and plundering the very peoples knowledges you profess to develop, stolen lands, stolen minds, stolen lives and stolen reason. What kind of reasoned individual could do this to another"?

"Immanuel! Immanuel! Damn where is he" said Hobbes. "Barbarian to whom do you call"? "Why to Immanuel Kant, if I can't get through to you then perhaps Kant can, you dirty savage"! said Hobbes.

A Critique of Peer Reason

"Immanuel"! "Quiet dear sir you might awake the whole of humanity" replied Kant. "Although besides you and I do not see any other humanity out here" said Kant. "Quite right my fellow man, what we see here is this thing trying to solve the problem, or should I say trying very hard to be reasonable but he does not know what reason is, so I summoned you to explain to him what reason is," said Hobbes. Kant began to speak "well Thomas as you and I both know and as I have written in my book 'Critique of Pure Reason'. Of which I would like to say is still being read and referenced by reasoned scholars within the academies, therein written a passage where I point out that the basis of reason is the existence of a soul. This soul is what differs man from beast" said Kant. "kikway oma soul peyakwan ci atayokawina"? was my repost. "Listen to his Gibberish Immanuel although I have heard him speak some form of the King's English he speaks this native tongue" added Hobbes.

"What kind of a human being with this type of soul would treat another human being as refuse? I don't want a soul that the two of you carry that was

sanctified by that evil that was here last night. I don't want to be part of your human race, a mythical race of people that thinks themselves superior to all other peoples. I don't want to wander around this earthlife after I am done living for this is all that is known and can be known through your limited humanity. I want and need to be connected to all of creation, related to all the things that I am relative to. Your humanity is limited to your pathetic form of reason sanctioned by your pope," I cried angrily.

"Listen to him babble, look at him cry, have you ever heard such drivel? His emotions clearly get in the way of his reason. We are not and do not profess to be sanctioned by the pope, we are bound by the right of mankind and by the development of reason and bound by morals and ethics to seek liberty and freedom from constraint to further the project of humanity" said Kant.

At this time another ragged looking gentlemen happened upon us, I asked, "who are you and where did you come from"? "I am Jeremy Bentham, and I come from a long line of philosophers, two of whom are sitting right before you trying to explain to you that there isn't a problem between men. There exists a problem between men and you peoples," said Bentham.

"Yes, yes that is it, Thomas and I concur with you Jeremy that these 'peoples' are the problem" said Kant.

All For One and One For All

"In the writing of my book Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation which was published in 1780, I wrote 'nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand, the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne'. Young savage, why do you take such a painful way to get your answers when you can go and read my book which to me is very pleasurable and give up all this pain and suffering?" said Bentham.

"Why must I go and read your books when all of you are right here right now? The most important concept in my culture is wahkotowin, which means relations. Developing and fostering good relations is paramount to leading miyo pimatsowin, which is the good life" I replied as I stood my ground.

"Sounds like pleasure seeking to me doesn't it my esteemed colleagues?" replied Bentham. "Oh of course Jeremy it sure does," said Hobbes, "I would also agree Bentham," added Kant.

"I must say that I agree that you the individual is doing what you want to do but to do it for the community? In my book I also say that the individual is

real and the community is mythical; the community cannot be rational yet the individual can be rational but I do say you doing this type of research is wholly irrational indeed" posted Bentham, "here here Jeremy" said Kant "Remarkably so Bentham" chimed in Hobbes.

"In my own defense your rationalism was developed by our relations in Europe. But what I find most problematic about rationalism is that there is a color line that divides who can and cannot be rational. It does not matter if one is an individual or a community in this sense what matters the most to rationality is the color of ones skin" was my riposte.

"Why that is ludicrous: for years we have assimilated people into our societies as long as they become rational and follow the principle of utility, 'that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness...or...to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness'" said Bentham.

"Yes and my peoples, like many othered Indigenous peoples that do not become assimilated, are looked at as objects. This is why slavery occurred. This is why all the lands that this country and many other countries around the world occupy which are truly owned by Indigenous nations are indeed stolen lands," I told them.

"Oh so you want to get political? Well we must call for the Mills boys, we could call on David Hume but his political ideals are so idealistic because he spent most of his life writing and not enough of it living"! said Bentham as all three men let out a mighty roar of laughter. "James! John!" shouted Bentham.

"Coming, Coming, Daddy is all tied up but I am here, how can I be of assistance and I must say certainly good to see you uncle Jeremy and the two of you Mister Hobbes and Mister Kant, this must be some important meeting to be in such fine company" said John Stuart Mill.

"Well J.S. this savage here is really getting our dander up, he does not understand utility or rationalism and he is accusing us of larceny and theft," said Hobbes.

On Liberty…ism

"Freedom from constraint from a tyrannical government is what liberty is all about, according to my" I cut off J.S. before he could finish "Yes I know to my book that 'I' ought to go and read, and what is the title of your book"? I said. "On Liberty and other writings and yes you should go and read" John finished. "I suppose it was the act of a good government that brought Hitler and Mussolini to power? How about Stalin? I replied. "Wait a minute Stalin was and still is a Communist"! said J.S. "Well what about Hitler and

Mussolini"? I queried. "Liberty gone awry! What lurks in the hearts of man must be guarded against say I, John Stuart Mill. In my writing 'the subjection of women' I call for my colleagues to allow women into our circle to vote and to be considered equals so that our just society can further its progress to a utopian existence where all men are created equal"!

"mmm assimilationist policies making women equal to men, why would any women want to be equal to you barbarian brutes that go out in the name of imperialism and colonize other peoples? You 'ass holes' go out steal land, kill innocent peoples, rape the women and children, steal resources and bring them back to your home lands and say how rich your culture and societies truly are is this Liberty? Is this Utility? Is this Rational? How can relations treat othered relations in such a way"? was my reply.

I looked at this distinguished panel of dubious thinkers and writers and wondered why do people within the academy continue to research and cite these guys. If their concepts can lead to the evil that has happened historically throughout the world and continue to happen to this day then why don't we take a page out of Hitler's manual Mein Kampfh and have a book burning? But wait a minute it was not only Hitler that had book burnings did not the Americans also burn 'subversive' books? Does not each country carry out censorship to 'protect' its citizens? Is this Liberty? Or

Liberty ism gone awry. I left these 'esteemed *individuals'* to their musings and returned to my encampment; darkness was descending quickly so I raised my pipe once again thanking mamawtawsit for another day.

"grandfather sweetgrass smudge my pipe and tobacco so I may show them to the creator, mamawtawsit look upon my pipe and tobacco and afford them your blessings". I point my pipe to the sacred directions asking for continued guidance, support, help and blessings for I have learned much from being out here. I have learned that the pain inflicted upon peoples from people is just, ethical and right by some people's standards. I have learned that if you are deemed irrational then you are not really a man or even human. And to be a man the color of one's skin is more powerful than the belief system that wells in the heart of man. I learned that these men look at their white women as property so what does that make women of color look like to them. " oh mamawtawsit we need your help" I cried.

My stomach ached and burned throughout the day but not from the obvious physical pain and discomfort from not eating or drinking. This was a profound soul pain that was coming from generations upon generations of peoples that were marginalized, displaced, alienated and murdered all in the name of liberty. To whose liberty is this privilege accorded?

As I smoked my pipe a well of tears flowed from my being cleansing my spirit and restoring equilibrium to a day that was out of balance. I was comforted by nimosom ospwakan. My grandfather pipe has never let me down, the pipe has taught me some tough lessons but I have always learned from these lessons.

As I drew on the pipe I noticed that darkness had erupted and enveloped all of creation. I reloaded the pipe and smudged it and let it down, placing it back upon the altar safely by my side.

I am looking forward to tomorrow because tomorrow is the day that the oskapeyosak come to take my food order. It is also the day that visitors, yes real human visitors, come to visit. I like to think of tomorrow as the day of education because when the visitors arrive conversation occurs and teachings are shared. The teachings that are shared are unlike any other teachings one may receive in the classroom for the space is different and the time is different. Once again I can have some contact with my relations from the earthlife. Also I know that after tomorrow I can come out of this fast a new being. Woohoo I am over half-way there!

As I crawl into my bedroll I watch the fire flicker. I am slowly lured into a hypnotic state, a state of security knowing that the spirit of the fire is there to watch over me warming my spirit and my flesh. The fire spirit enters deep

into my psyche where the blood of my progenitors continues to flow, awakening the red road and soothing my consciousness into a deep and much needed sleep…as I close my eyes and open my mind to what the possibilities really are. My being becomes unbound by the darkness that I am now witnessing. There in the darkness is a space that knows no boundary. Neither inside nor outside, no beginning no ending, just an endless sea of infinity. Everything is related there in the darkness as it is here on this earthlife.

"Rest and learn my grandson rest and learn" were the words I heard from a familiar voice as I drifted ….

LAST NIGHT, I Had A DREAM

Awakening one crisp and clear fall morning from a sleep within which I had a dream, within this dream I worked in our local school. Our local school is on the Saddle Lake Reserve #125. In this dream I walked through all the classrooms and was quite astonished to see white children being educated alongside Indian children. I walked through all the classrooms to be greeted by this strange sight. In the classrooms the teachers were all of nehiyaw descent and spoke nehiyawewin language as well in their pedagogical instruction. All the students were attentive and the subject matter was of course the r's. Read'n, 'rite'n and 'rithmatic were all being taught in nehiyawewin.

OK now I am in reality here in the 21st century and what red-blooded settler Canadian is going to want their progeny being educated alongside Indians especially in Indian speak and on a reserve in Canada? I did not think too much of that dream as I went about my business as "center administrator" in that very school. Why center administrator? Well it was pointed out that I didn't have the credential of a bachelor's degree to work in that institution so I couldn't be a 'principal'. My duties are all that of a principal and vice principal but my title was different. I go about my daily ritual of

administration in a cultural way. Adding the dimension of Indigenous epistemology to this mundane existence.

That night as I lay my weary soul to sleep I think about last night's dream what did it mean? I drift off to the safety and the darkness of sleep time. I am shown a science class tonight and there I am lying on the bench and awaiting my fate. There smiling down upon me is a nice friendly non-threatening brown face. I smile back at this young native boy as he prepares to do god knows what to me in the science lab. At this moment I hear a booming voice in the distance, "ok class it is time to put your frogs to sleep. Place the chloroform on the towel and place the towel on your specimen until you see your specimen stop breathing. Hey Joe try not to club your frog and don't eat him either". My heart rate raced as I knew my fate: I was to be an experiment for the day. As I lay there awaiting my expiration I wondered whom this Joe person was. The booming voice of instruction drew nearer, "hey Joe you dumb savage I said to kill your frog and don't eat him". I heard quiet snickers from the rest of the class grow into howls of laughter. I looked up at the once smiling young countenance only to see that it had turned to a look of twisted pain and tears. This youngster that was to be my scientist for the day had been broken by the ugliness that was aimed at him. I awoke the next morning troubled by what I had seen and heard in that science

classroom. Where was that classroom? Was that teacher in my school? Why did that teacher single out Joe? Why was I given that dream?

All day long I was troubled by the questions that had come to me I took those questions with me to bed that night wanting answers to the dreams that were piling up in my head.

I drifted off to sleep and was shown a space that was lit by the brilliance of the color of yellow. There within that space were a lot of my ancestors that were once part of the earthlife but had now gone on to inhabit that space known to us on the earthlife as the spiritworld. Feelings of peace and tranquility filled my very essence, as I became that color of brilliant yellow. There within that juncture the old school of Blue Quills came into view and there on the grounds of that school were these peoples looking very scared, very hurt, very angry, and yet very determined. I could hear their prayers as they lifted their pipes, "mamawtawsit help us was we take control of our futures. For to long the moniyawak have educated us and were not successful in their attempts. We do not have our own doctors or lawyers all we have are Indian chiefs! Help us creator". I realized what I was seeing and hearing was the time of the take over of Blue Quills Residential School by my progenitors in 1970.

When I awoke that morning I felt like I was being shown something of great importance but what could be so important and what could I do about it? These thoughts permeated my being for that whole day and with the Indigenous epistemological knowledge that all things happen in a series of four I anxiously awaited my next dream.

That night I was hurled into scenes of horrific violence with a gentle yet deafening hum that accompanied the whole dream sequence. The space looked and had the feel of a Nazi concentration camp of the Second World War era. My grandfather and aunts and uncles were a part of that war it was supposed to be the war to end all wars. It was the war against race and racism. These relations of mine would speak of the devil and how he would march men women and children to their doom in the huge ovens of destruction. My mosom had shown me photographs of this phenomenon and I remembered seeing pictures in my grade six social studies textbook as well. I witnessed a group of young children in black and white imagery being marched somewhere. Along the way a young lad that couldn't have seen more then six summers resisted being told where to go, the guard in a flowing black robe took the boy and savagely pushed the boy along and hurtled him down the stairwell to his final destination. There at the bottom of the stair I heard a hideous crack as the boy lay limp and out of time. I

looked at the boy in horror as the rest of the children were in a state of terror. The black robe yelled at the rest of the children to keep moving or else… Through out the entirety of this dream was a droning hum that I could feel through too my core. This hum would increase and decrease in decibels as the voices of the beings within my dream would rise and fall like the sounds of a distant choir singing their heavenly praises to the lord thy god. A voice pierced this heavenly intonation "we shall take the Indian out of the Indian and solve the Indian question once and for all". Was that the voice of the devil that my progenitors had spoken about those so many winters ago? With this utterance I realized I wasn't witnessing a death ritual at a Nazi concentration camp, I was in an Indian residential school. I was in that exact same school that my progenitors helped to liberate in the early 70's.

That morning a troubled soul awoke from a garish nightmarish dream. I took out my pipe from my sacred bundle and raised my pipe to the creator for help in deciphering my path. While I prayed I called for guidance from my guides and offered my total being for answers. As I smoked the pipe in my small bedroom a thick cloud of smoke arose from my smudge bowl, my lungs and my pipe. The smoke filled the room and engulfed my being making me feel safe, and secure in my haze of sacredness. When the smoke cleared there sitting before me was an old being, "tanisi nosasay, nipetawaw

kikasimowin ote", "nimosom nimoyah ninistotin kakiyaw nehiyawewin, kipiskwateyan ci akayasimowin ci?" with this the old one laughed and said of "course I can speak the white language".

I asked the old one what those dreams were about and why was I the one to receive those dreams? The old one looked at me long and hard before she started to speak, "nosim I am your dreamer or dream keeper and I was chosen by mamawtawsit to guide you through this dream sequence.

I was disheartened when the first dream did not have the impact that I wanted you to receive when you were given the dream in a human form. I returned the next night and gave you the dream in the form of an animal because in times of great need our relations within the animal kingdom intercede on our behalf and give us the teachings but once again you were so dense as to not receive the message.

I then returned on the third night to give you the dream in color. I hoped you would understand but once again it was like showing a child something for the first time. In the west where the sun rises is the color of yellow it is the color you raise to get the teachings of honesty. And by showing you the answer flooded in the color of yellow I prayed you would receive 'the what' we in the spirit world were trying to show to you.

Finally I came on the last night with the hum of creation. I was elated that you were beginning to understand that you were going to be given another message but I was disheartened when after showing you once again the answer to life's problems a problem with humanity you still did not get it.

Coming into your dreams with the hum of creation was the last step in the dreaming process. Step one the answer is revealed in a human form, step two the answer is revealed by our animal relations, step three the answer is revealed through color and the final step is sound. When a person does not respond to any of these messages from the spiritworld then the person stops dreaming and is shown the way through another ceremony. Was I ever happy when you raised your pipe and asked for guidance through your pipe".

I thought about what the old one had to say and asked myself "am I that dense, not to receive the answer after four consecutive nights of dreaming?"

"Yes you are" replied the old one. "You can read my mind?" "The mind speaks loudly" was her reply.

"OK then why all the dreams". "The answer nosim is what you peoples call Racism: it is humanity's problem"

"In your first dream we showed you how good things could be for all humanity if only all peoples could learn from one another: your reaction to

this was how absurd this is. You my grandson are racialised". "What do you mean I am racialised?" "Nosim you work in a school: you should read your books. Racialization is the process of growing up in a space that is inherently racist. When racism informs and shapes legislation and policy then racism is institutionalized. In your ancestors' time our relations from Europe came to this land. They needed the natural resources for their use in their homelands. They saw how plentiful the lands were so they signed treaties with your progenitors. This whole process is now known as colonization and at the heart of each colonialist is the ideal that our race is better then your race. This type of racist thinking is what informs racist ideology and racist ideology has been around for thousands of years. However scientific racism has been around for only the past hundred years but nosim there is only one race it is called the human race". I asked the old one "how come she knew so much". "All these old dead white guys, these so called great philosophers, come to see the creator when they die. They all have to explain themselves to the creator and all of us in the spiritworld get to hear what they have to say.

The creator reminds them that when they were given the opportunity to be on the earthlife they promised the creator that they would love all of creator's creation equally. Love is the greatest gift that the creator has gifted

to all of creation so that there is balance on the earthlife. So when these dead white guys come the creator asks "why?" "the answer that is mostly given is "forgive me father for I have sinned". "We all have a great chuckle at this reply because in the spiritworld there is no gender because gender is a human construction, and the creator is a great mystery. It is always assumed that the creator is a man but who on the earthlife can bear children? It is women that can bear children so then we in the spiritworld strongly believe that the creator is a woman but there is no gender up here"!

"In your second dream there you were some poor frog awaiting patiently. The frog is a close relation to the turtle and it is upon the turtle's back that the earthlife rides. The frog is the little brother of truth and honesty and what I tried to show to you is how could an adult treat a child so unfairly? They're entrusted with developing the next group of citizens: that position is the ultimate in rationalism…the teacher. In nehiyaw culture the teachers are the elders the old kind caring ones. In this mainstream culture the teachers are steeped in rationalism but I have to ask you what kind of rational being could treat another human being in such an irrational way? Why it is because of the specter of racism that teacher doesn't want that native child to be educated because if they were to become educated then there would be a shift in the power relations that racism and racist ideology upholds.

The next dream I showed you was the take over at Blue Quills, your ancestors that are over in the spiritworld are still being rewarded for standing up for what they believed in so many years ago. What is wrong with teaching people their culture and language that was handed down to the people by mamawtawsit? Yes you were right about the peoples living in fear at that time because racism robs peoples of their self-esteem and their self-concept it dehumanizes all people. The people that have to live under the racist onslaught day after day and the racists that practice racism just to feel good about themselves and hold a vulgar power relationship over the 'othered'. "Wow you know a lot," I said to the old one, her reply "go read a book". I asked "why should I go read a book when you are right here and I can converse with you, I can develop a relationship with you; I can not have a relationship with a book"! "Ah, nosim once again it is all racialised; all they know is what they know and all their knowledge is tied up in their books. What you say is true but they only privilege their knowledge meanwhile they go and wipe out millennia of indigenous epistemology because they do not understand and they fear what they do not know".

"Nokom, what is the meaning of that last dream?" "What I tried to show you was a historical look at what was done in the name of assimilation and nationalism to your progenitors. Killing one's language and making them

assimilate into another nation in the name of strengthening a nation or nation building is racially problematic. Nationalism is a thinly disguised form of racism. Nationalism is supposed to be good for the nation that it is building but what about all the nations that experienced a genocidal impact on their societies? You thought the dream was about Nazi Germany but it wasn't; it was about Blue Quills Indian Residential School. But nosim at least in Nazi Germany when the war was over the Germans had to pay for their indiscretions in Canada are the churches and the government paying for their roles in the Canadian holocaust?" "I never thought about it as a holocaust but yeah I guess it is genocidal in nature".

"Nosim go read a few books get the language, their language, and criticize what they have. When I say criticize I do not mean all negative for there is some positive in everything that happens. As for the question of why you were chosen, we chose you because we knew something would be done ekosi pitima nosim"

"Tanisi napew, wanska napew, Napew! Hey you wake up your sleeping the best part of the day away"! "What the…"? "The old man sent me out here to get your food order for tomorrow, what do you want? Watermelon, steak, big mac, how about some Pepsi"?

After three days of fasting food becomes inconsequential. Water, however, is still important: it must have really rained hard last night because there are little pools of water everywhere on my tarp and oh man do they ever look good! "I want some water with that fizzy stuff with some lemon slices in it. I also want some pancakes with strawberries and whipped cream, lots of strawberries and whipped cream. That should about do it for my first meal to break this fast; we will have break-fast together hahahahaha mmmm I wonder if that is where the word 'breakfast' comes from"?

"I think you have been out here too long: your corny jokes are making you laugh, well it's less then 24 hours now so have a good day. Hey this black guy showed up here today, he calls himself cookie. He says he has come to see someone about speaking English. We told him there ain't any English teachers here. He says its OK to slaughter the English language, anyhow we will smudge him and send him over here cause the old man says it is you that the black man has come to see".

I watched the oskapeyos leave and wondered who this black man might be but I had a pipe to do and flags to smudge to get ready for this day of visiting. As I raised my pipe to the creator, I thanked the creator for last nights teachings. I was so wrapped up within that vision that I forgot I was out here in the bush fasting. I remember one of my teachings that if you

experience all the senses of touch, sight, smell, hearing and encounter beings within a dream then you have had a vision, hence the pop cultural explanation of the vision quest.

I smoked the pipe and smudged my cloth. It is important to honor these sacred offerings; this process helps to keep focused and in the moment of what one is praying for. This process of honoring happens every morning and every evening and the pipe is raised as often as needed while fasting. I lowered my pipe and replaced it upon the altar.

I marveled at the bright colors that have been within my presence for the last three days. When feeding upon oneself one senses become sharper. Colors are brighter. Scents are sharper. Sounds are clearer. You can hear the hum of creation if you truly listen. Most folks never get to hear this hum. This hum is similar to the hum of the high powered electrical lines that bring hydroelectric energy to the homes throughout this land, it is the same thing but different. How does one describe the smell of a rose to one who has never smelled a rose? It is the smelling of the rose that enlightens one. It is going through the fasting process that opens up ones empiricism to the phenomenology of being, pardon me Martin Heidegger.

It is this act of feeding upon oneself that truly informs one of one's place here upon the earthlife. When feeding upon one's self all that is

unneccessary falls away, all minutia that tends to be considered important and central to life are let go. What stays are the answers to life's, one's life's problems. When the answers come into view it is then up to the individual to bring these answers back to the peoples because it is these answers that are messages from the spiritworld for not just the individual but for all peoples; this is a core tenet to Indigenous ontology.

Compared to eurocetric ontology where through dialectical logic one needs the other to inform one of whom one is, a negative type of learning. A negative based logic that one uses to learn about oneself through dialogue with the other and the other is not even considered human mmmm there is something just a bit twisted with that form of creation of the self and how this self interacts with 'others'.

Cookie

"Hello my brother"! The sound of a human voice broke my postulation and returned me to 'reality'? "tansi napew" I replied" " I am Ngugi wa Thiongo and I am not quite sure why I am here. I spoke with the old man and he told me what it is that you were doing out here, he said I needed to talk to you"

"I am honored you are here and finally a visitor that isn't refering to me as a savage. I read your book Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language

in African Literature. Reading your book has helped to shape my writing and my research".

"Why should I call you savage we are brothers and to call you savage would be like calling myself a savage or a nigger. Yes I have written that 'English in Africa is a cultural bomb that continues a process of erasing memories of pre-colonial cultures and history and as a way of installing the dominance of new, more insidious forms of colonialism'. And now I know why I am here; I am here to encourage you to continue within your space and to use the tools of your ancestors to unravel this horrible problem of racism. Have you read Franz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, Albert Memme, C.L.R.James, Paulo Friere and many many more authors that have become learned with the masters tools and are deconstructing the house? What you are doing here is the right thing because what you have is older then the western academies. What we have in Africa is also old but violence and terror, the tools of the colonizers, have done much damage, much damage indeed. Keep up the good work young man and remember to use your language as much as possible your progeny are counting on you".

With that "Cookie' got up to leave, "hey wait a minute what time is it'? "The old man told me to leave my watch behind when they smudged me he

said I was entering spirit time when I came out here". He turned and left leaving me with an enriched sense of purpose.

Just when I thought I had the whole thing figured out he left me with more peoples to read and more ground to cover. I laid back and thought of all the visits that I have had so far. Visits from the old dead white guys that have brought me the foundations of racism. What I have now just learned is that there are several othered peoples out there doing their work to answer this age old question also. I yearned to speak to these othered peoples as well. Why was I given these seminal 'white' men? Why wasn't I shown more peoples like Ngugi and the peoples Ngugi mentioned?

Once again I raised my pipe and asked for help. I prayed ceremoniously for more answers and there was silence. I smoked the pipe staying in the moment, for it is within the moment that things happen, and nothing happened. I finished smoking the pipe reloaded the pipe and turned my altar around. When babies are ready to arrive onto this earthlife they turn themselves around within the confines of the womb. When one is out fasting one has to also turn oneself around. This turn around is a sign to the spiritworld that I am ready to return to the earthlife with new life. Like a new baby there is a sense of excitement around this night. It is hard to sleep

when you know that they will be coming to get you early in the morning to put you back in the sweat lodge and to give you a drink of water.

As I lay in my lodge I notice an ant crawling its way up the lodge upon the canvas covering. The ant crawls and crawls only to come to a crease and falls gently back upon the earth. The ant gets back on the canvas and diligently makes it way back up the canvas once again. Darkness envelopes me and the ant but with my keen sense of hearing I continue to hear its sohkitowin its strength and desire to finish what it has started kind of reminds me of some one I know....profoundly.

Sohkitohnamowin

Sohkitonamowin is one of our natural laws and is represented by the rock people. The rock people have been on this earthlife since the beginning of time and are still doing the same thing that they were doing back then. Rock people help us by straightening out our prayers, for they have excellent memories. Rock people also show us strength in the commitments we make here on the earthlife. Every thing here on the earthlife is related and everything placed here by the creator is here to teach us guide us support us and help us.

Under the cover of night that little ant was showing me never give up akamaymow kiya pomey. When something is worthwhile doing keep going; practice sokihtanamowin.

In the darkness racing through my mind was the desire to go to my nearest library and read these authors so I can get a complete understanding of the color line.

"Ouch"! I awoke in great pain upon my eyelid. I brushed at my face only to find that little ant trying very arduously to take a chunk of my countenance home with him. Rubbing the growing lump on my eyelid from the assault of my little brother, or sister for that matter, I muttered to my self "damn it's still dark out here; I wonder what time it is".

The Bush Party

I must have been still half asleep because when I regained full consciousness I could hear shrieks of laughter surrounding the beating of a drum. I scurried out my sleeping gear and out into the darkness and their dancing and cajoling around a campfire. There around a campfire that I did not light were a group of peoples celebrating life.

One of celebrants and older fellah came right out and just started speaking, "how does it feel to be a problem?" On page one in my book 'The Souls of Black Folk' I ask this question and now here you are researching the real

problem. Allow me to introduce myself: I am W.E.B. DuBois. It is a pleasure to meet you brother I have brought along a few of my colleagues that wanted to say something to you. When Ngugi came to visit you this afternoon we were lurking in the shadows awaiting our opportunity. Then when we saw you raise your pipe we wanted to come forward. But when you fell asleep we started this here fire and brought out the drums and arrived in grand fashion. The drum unites all of us Indigenous folks; it is the beating within our chests, our very being relies on our drums, so here we are a singing and a dancing but when the bell tolls we know it is our time to leave".

"I need to agree with you W.E.B. DuBois; allow me to introduce myself I am Aim'e C'esaire pardon the french accent I am still trying to overcome my frenchness to this day but that is another story. In my book a 'Discourse on Colonialism' on page 31 I wrote 'a civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization…the fact is that so called European civilization-'western civilization'…is incapable of solving the two major problems to which its existence has given rise: the problem of the proletariat and the colonial problem:…' The problem you speak of DuBois is the same problem that is inherent to all of mankind and this young man is solving the problem of racism, the world is awaiting your treatise"

"Bienvenue hahahaha I too am trying to overcome my frenchness and I am honored to be here with my mentor Aim'e, I am Franz Fanon and on this earthlife we are considered the 'Wretched of the Earth' but here in the spiritworld we are free to dance and rejoice. In the space that you are now sitting it has been proven that 'colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it'. I wrote this in 1963 and it still is the same over 40 years later because of the racism inherent to colonialist societies. I must admit to you young man that it is about time we heard from the original folks of this land. This land that we are now on and were forcefully delivered unto for the pleasure of the master".

"Why yes master Fanon they not only drain the brain they assume that the peoples no nothing and are prepared to reprogram the brain with half truths. This is the project of today's education system not only in my old home country of Brazil but everywhere that the colonialists need to spread their ideology. I am Paulo Freire; in my writing of Pedagogy of the Oppressed in 1970, the same year your peoples took over Blue Quills School, on page 72, I state 'education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students

are the depositories and the teacher the depositor'; it is the total reprogramming of a peoples it is what Ngugi and you were talking of earlier today".

"Said here, Edward Said that is, when Napoleon came to Egypt he issued a proclamation. 'Bonaparte's proclamation of July 2, 1798, put it to the people of Alexandria' this is a direct quote on page 82 in my book titled Orientalism, written in 1978. Napoleon brought with him an academy of writers called Orientalists to 'refill' the empty minds of the peoples."

"I say my dear colleagues I am a little late arriving here but I was watching a test match and the great Garfield Sobers was batting but I noticed that the bell was about to toll so I rushed straight away to attend to these proceedings" said a rather athletically built older man.

"Whom might you be"? I asked politely.

"Oh pardon my manners, I am C.L.R. James, post colonial writer and cricket aficionado. In 1963 I wrote a book called Beyond the Boundary and I posed the question 'What do they know of cricket who only cricket know'? It is this simple question that should get the British and all colonizers to close their eyes. When their eyes are opened all that they can see through their eyes is what they have created and from my colleagues' writings they have created a very corrupted society. It is one thing to transcend a boundary, it is

another to understand who and what created that boundary and why the boundary, in this case the color line, has to exist."

With all the drumming, dancing, singing, and talking we lost all track of time, when all of a sudden we noticed the old man coming up the trail with a rather dignified looking older woman at his side. I thought for sure all my visitors would vanish into the morning's light but they all sat and awaited for what was to happen next.

"tanisi noosim"? the old man queried. "moyah nantow" was my reply.

"noosim niwapimaw micitowak okiyokewak" said the old man.

"tapwe nimoosom they are visitors from afar and I thought they would leave with the mornings light".

"noosim, this women came yesterday but she arrived too late for me to send her out here but she said she needed to come and speak with you, these okiyokewak must also need to hear her message this why they are still here"

"hello young man, I am bell hooks. I felt this tremendous need to come to your land and speak to someone I did not know, to whom it was I supposed to speak, but when I arrived here and met Ngugi we had a nice chat about what it was you were doing here in the forest. You realize, young man, that most researchers stay within the nice, climate controlled confines of the institution's libraries to do this type of research? But I am sure happy to be

here and also more happy to see that you are doing the research from an Indigenous epistemological stand point. I wrote a book titled Black Looks in 1992. One of the chapters in the book is called Revolutionary "Renegades" and I am deeply honored to be here on your lands with many of the renegades that have taken to task, in their life's work, the problem of racism. Racism is just one of the tools that privileges the colonizer. Other tools that these here men have not had the privilege of feeling are genderism and sexism. I am a woman and black as well. Racism needs its allies to truly work on all the peoples of the othered nations: divide and conquer, divide and conquer. Getting back to my book, one of the most important statements that needs to be realized is that we are all related. The black peoples experience of the ties to the land is the same as our nehiyawak niwakohmakanak ties to the land. We are all related here on this earthlife as we are related in the spiritworld"

This is what the bell 'told' all of us, with that my spiritual visitors drifted off to another realm. I realized what DuBois meant when he said "when the bell tolls it is time for us to leave".

The elder arose and covered me with my blanket and said "it is time for us to go home".

Mahtotsahn Kamik

Walking out of the fasting grounds amidst the morning mist, covered with a blanket, looking a little disheveled but glad to be back amongst the living. As I enter the grounds that surround my father's house I am happy to see that the sweat rocks are burned to the ground and are ready for the sweat that will finally break this fast. The elder gently tells me "go get ready, we are going to sweat shortly".

I go to take off the clothes that I have been suffering in and change into my sweat shorts; I know that after the first round they will give me water and welcome me back home, back home to the earthlife, safe at home. As I return to the sweat the elder is making the call to the four directions "pick up your blankets with life and come and sweat".

The oskapeyos brings in the first hot stone that is glowing red with the spiritual energy that sustains us. One of the sources of power from kisikaw pisim the one that brings the day light. The elder then enters the lodge and beckons me inside.

Inside the lodge I smell the familiar and comforting scent of the smudge as I settle in for this sacred ceremony. One after another the asiniyak enter the lodge each one more powerful than the last. Through my mind goes the thought "oh my god this old fool is going to cook me for his last act of

kindness"? "Don't worry nosim I am not going to cook you, if I cook you then I too will cook, anyhow we should leave the cooking to the cooks they have quite the feast awaiting us". "mosom, how did you know what I was thinking?" "just a lucky guess, I guess" was his reply as he smiled at me knowingly.

When the rest of the rocks were brought in and placed in the middle of lodge, the rest of the singers, supporters, sweaters and family entered into our mother's womb. It always amazes me that when we are born into this earthlife we come out of a space that is around 98 degrees into a place that is 72 degrees and we cry. When we return to our mothers womb, the sweat lodge, we leave a space that is 72 degrees and return to a place that is around 98 degrees and we cry; when will we as peoples be satisfied?

The sweat is a fitting end to the fasting ceremony for it is known as our mother's womb. When we return from the spiritworld back to the earthlife through the sweatlodge we are once again reborn into happy time. Happy time is when we are born onto this earthlife and we are happy to be here, after the completion of a fast. Look into a faster's eyes you will see elation.

All these thoughts are running through my mind as I vaguely hear the elder's prayers as he raises his pipe.

Having Jesus Christ come to visit, the pope, and these other dead white guys, I can see why the Christ was there, but these other guys? Last night's revelry with the black folks and their revelations were all coming back to me in this hot space. I was hoping that the elder would be able to piece this all together for me but all he did was pray. But, I think if I was to focus on his prayer I could probably be able to figure out these questions from what he was praying for, for myself. Why couldn't I focus?

The pipe was now being shared and when it came to me I took a few puffs and passed it along. The old lady that came to visit on the night before last and that weird dream sequence I actually thought I was doing all that stuff or was I? Once again the pipe came around and then it left again. Geez that was quick isn't anyone else in here smoking other then me? Before I could think any further the water pail was brought in and the elder was lowering his pipe. "Hey what happened to the last two rounds of the pipe"? "The pipe made four rounds," the elder replied, "where were you?" he chuckled as he called for the door to be closed.

Wesakecak nitekowin

"Wesakecak nitekowin kakiyaw iyiniw nosimin…." I listened to the elder singing his opening song to wesakicak our nistasimaw our older brother the teacher. I could smell once again the sweet scent of the smudge as it filled

my nostrils making my head spin from its rich fragrance. Deep within the bowels of my being came a voice, a voice as such that I have never heard before but it carried a familiar message.

"Kipaha kimiskisik! close your eyes and open your mind to what the possibilities really are. Become unbound by the darkness that you are now witnessing. There in the darkness is a space that knows no boundary. Neither inside, nor outside, no beginning, no ending, just an endless sea of infinity. Everything is related here in the darkness as it is there on the earthlife. From the smallest pebble of sand to the largest mountain. From the single celled animals to the animals that think they know reason. Yes this earthlife where the great mystery mamowtawsowin of creation is celebrated by all inhabitants but for a brief moment in time and space. Our lives are like the feather on my brother the eagle's wing. We can soar to great heights but in the end we are shed and fall to the ground only to be replaced by new growth".

"It is me little brother wesakecak I have been with you right from the start. It was me that placed those thoughts in your head and in your heart. That is the answer to the question that you came looking for: close your eyes what do you see? Nothing. Nothing is exactly how much mankind knows about anything".

"Yes I realize this nistesimaw that is why I came to fast to learn, so why were those moniyawak sent to me"?

"nisim my younger brother we just wanted you to see that this thing you called racism has been grown for a long time. Grown by men so that they can have influence over other men. I do not call this influence power because mamawtowsit is the one power in all of creation that can give and take life. What these moniyawak symbolize kiskinawacihcikacesiwin or in their language embody is the developments in their way of thinking moniyaw mamtinacikan. What do you think of when I say Babe Ruth"?

"nistesimaw I think of baseball"

"nisim what do you think of when I say Jesus".

"nistesimaw I think of the cross"

"nisim all these people kiskinawacihcikacesiwin symbolically embody these things that they now come to represent. When people think of contracts they think of the man called Hobbes. When people think of Reason they think of Kant. When people think of Politics they think of Mill. All of these guys and many more helped to oyasiwewin make laws or to codify their way of thinking. The way they think moniyaw mamtinakcikan has been developed for at least ten thousand years about the time of the land bridge theory they like to refer to. This type of thinking separates man from woman. Man from

the environment. Man from space. Man from man. Man from the spiritworld.

In our way of thinking we are related to all these things, if these relationships are ever broken then all must be remade again as it has in the past. newo iyiniw mamtinacikan has laws too, laws of practice what you are doing here in this matotsahn kamik is keeping those laws alive keeping them vibrating with the lifeforce energy, the power of creation. This is why you were granted so many visitors on this fast. The black folks that came to see you were all brothers and sisters that have come to this earthlife and enjoyed a good life miyo pimatosiwin even if they were being raced against. They rose above that way of thinking and being to be whom the creator expected them to be, as everyone else is supposed to do with their short time within this the creator's paradise.

When the creator made this earthlife all things were created to live side by side in harmony. The plants, animals, fire, water, earth, and the wind understood this and they continue to understand this to this day. The tree did not transform itself into a cat and decide to rule the earth. The bear to this day continues to speak its own language, the language the creator gave the bear from day one. Did the bear start to speak like a wolf and decide to rule the earth? All the plants animals and elements of life all live together and

nurture each other. All trees live in the forest side by side along with the grasses, the animals and are nurtured by the life force energy. None has power over the other. Newo iyiniwak knew this but they are now forgetting these laws. This is why your work here is so important. It is said by the old ones that these laws would be written down by some one for the peoples, is this you nisim"?

"nistesimaw this is not me I am writing this for all of creation but I am not giving this over to any one else to hang on to. I need to place this sacred document in my medicine bundle for my wife's safe keeping because I want to keep the sacred law of practice alive. Also the law of wakotawin kinship, how can anyone have a relationship with a book"?

"nimis I do not know but all those peoples that have their laws in their holy books should read this or they should talk to peoples like you and me. You have learned much my little brother now you have to go and share with as many people and peoples as you can, take care nisim".

The door flap flew open and they passed in a pitcher of water the elder took the water and thanked nipiy atayohkan for bringing life, for the cleansing of our beings, and then handed the water to me. As I drank from the pitcher the sacred water I touched down to the earthlife regaining the connection back once again from the spiritworld....

Kahkihikin

The teachings and the writings contained here within have been gleaned from many years of fasting and the practice of the fasting ceremony. By being an observer, a faster, a helper, and now a leader the knowledge of the fasting ceremony is such that it is a way to reach the good life miyo pimatisowin. To once again know one's space here upon the earthlife and to realize the profound connection through wakotawin to all of creation.

The visits that I refer to within this project are all unexplainable and to get even 'one' visit during a fast is a gift from creation to receive. Many peoples have been fasting for 10- 20 – 30 or 40 years or more and have never experienced a 'visit' but they have faith that the helpers are there.

We all have been given eyes, ears, a nose and hands to experience this earthlife. However, not many people have had their eyes opened. To open one's eyes is to close one's eyes and really see what the possibilities really are. Once your eyes are opened then you can see what is really around you. What has substance, real substance, and what is only ideologically man made will fall away.

Kakihikin the notion of 'it could happen' is the basis of this text.

Kakihikin kakiyaw iysiniwak mamtinacikan wahkotowin ota nikawinan askiy epimoticik mihko meskanaw neteh miyo pimatisowin.

"it could happen that all the people will know that they are all related here on mother as they walk upon the red road to the good life"

ekosi pitima